

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
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C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 02318

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MT, CH
SUBJECT: NATIONALIST (OPPOSITION) PARTY DELEGATION TO
- VISIT THE PRC

1. A FIVE-MEMBER DELEGATION OF THE NATIONALIST PARTY (NP) LEFT JULY 24 FOR PEKING WHERE THEY EXPECT TO SPEND TWO WEEKS. THE DELEGATION IS HEADED BY DR. EDDIE FENECH ADAMI, PARTY LEADER, AND INCLUDES SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER DR. VINCENT TABONE. THE NATIONALISTS WERE INVITED BY THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

2. THE NP, WHICH IN THE PAST HAS BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE LABOR GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF PROMOTING CLOSE TIES WITH CHINA, HAS JUSTIFIED THIS VISIT BY STRESSING THE CHANGES IN PRC FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY THAT HAVE OCCURRED DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE ELIMINATION OF THE "GANG OF FOUR". THE DEMOCRAT - THE NP NEWSPAPER - IN A RECENT EDITORIAL COMMENTED THAT WHILE THE NP'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONCEPTS ARE AT VARIANCE WITH THOSE PRACTICED IN THE PRC, SOLIDARITY BETWEEN PEOPLES AS WELL AS COMMON CPOLITICAL AND OTHER INTERESTS "CREATE THE NEED" FOR CLOSER COOPERATION AND "PERSONAL RELATIONS" BETWEEN THE NP AND THE PRC.

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3. IN A PRESUMABLY UNRELATED DEVELOPMENT, RELIABLE GOVERNMENT SOURCES TELL US THAT PRC VICE PREMIER OF THE STATE COUNCIL KENG PIAO WILL ARRIVE IN MALTA ON JULY 31 FOR A TWO-DAY STAY. PIAO IS REPORTEDLY VISITING SEVERAL COUNTRIES IN AFRICA.

4. COMMENT: FENECH ADAMI CONFIRMED TO US THAT THE INITIATIVE FOR THIS VISIT CAME FROM THE CHINESE. WHILE CANDIDLY ADMITTING THAT THE NP'S PAST STRONG CRITICISM OF PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF'S CHINA POLICY IS SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSING NOW, FENECH ADAMI MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WAS PLEASED TO BE GOING TO CHINA.

5. THE NP BENEFITS IN AT LEAST TWO WAYS FROM THIS VISIT. FIRST, IT SHOWS THE MALTESE PEOPLE THAT THE NP IS NOW PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THE PRC AND THAT THE PRC IS WILLING TO TALK WITH THEM. GIVEN THE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE THE PRC HAS PROVIDED MALTA IN RECENT YEARS, THE NP NEEDS TO MAKE THIS POINT DOMESTICALLY. SECONDLY, THE NP AND THE PRC HAVE A COMMON INTEREST IN MALTA'S FUTURE FOREIGN POLICY AS BOTH ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO A RUSSIAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN MALTA. THE PRC MAY SEE THIS VISIT AS A MEANS OF REMINDING MINTOFF OF THEIR VIEWS WHILE THE NATIONALISTS WELCOME PRC SUPPORT FOR THEIR ANTI-SOVIET STANCE. THE DELEGATION SHOULD HAVE A GOOD TRIP. LAINGEN

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